DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 838 FL 027 174

AUTHOR	Algeo, John, Ed.
TITLE	The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume VI: English in North America.
ISBN	ISBN-0-521-26479-0
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	625p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Cambridge University Press, 110 Midland Ave., Port Chester, NY 10573-4930 ($120). Tel: 800-872-7423 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.cambridge.org.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Black Dialects; *Diachronic Linguistics; Foreign Countries; Grammar; Language Usage; *Language Variation; Linguistic Borrowing; *North American English; Spelling; United States History
IDENTIFIERS	Canada; Slang; United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This book is one volume in a series that examines the history of English. It traces the history of English in North America during the past 400 years, from its British background to its present position among the varieties of English used worldwide. Influences that have formed American English include political, social, and cultural changes in American life, contact with other languages in North America, and continuing immigration. In this book, 16 authorities consider how vocabulary (both standard and slang), grammar, spelling, and usage in both the standard language and regional and social dialects have evolved in response to various influences, noting the relationship between British and American English. Fourteen chapters examine the following: (1) "External History" (John Algeo); (2) "British and American, Continuity and Divergence" (John Hurt Fisher); (3) "British and Irish Antecedents" (Michael Montgomery); (4) "Contact with Other Languages" (Suzanne Romaine); (5) "Americanisms" (Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall); (6) "Slang" (Jonathan E. Lighter); (7) "Dialects" (Lee Pederson); (8) "African-American English" (Salikoko S. Mufwene); (9) "Grammatical Structure" (Ronald R. Butters); (10) "Spelling" (Richard L. Venezky); (11) "Usage" (Edward Finegan); (12) "Canadian English" (Laurel J. Brinton and Margery Fee); (13) "Newfoundland English" (William J. Kirwin); and (14) "American English Abroad" (Richard W. Bailey). (Contains approximately 1,020 bibliographic references, a glossary of linguistic terms, and an index.) (SM)

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